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THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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Making sense of the world

THE WEEK Junior

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

PASSING THROUGH
Until the 1920s, many nations had a transit tariff, which taxed goods that traveled through one country on the way to another.

Goods from around the world arrive in the US on cargo ships.

The first tariffs

The Tariff Act of 1789 was among the first laws passed in the US. Signed by President George Washington (above) and supported by Alexander Hamilton, who oversaw the economy, it added 10% taxes to imported goods, supported American businesses, and made up for debt incurred during the Revolutionary War.

Nations react to US tariffs

On August 7, tariffs established by President Donald Trump went into effect for dozens of nations, affecting global trading relationships. Tariffs are taxes imposed by the government on goods brought into the US from other nations.

What are the tariffs?

The new rates affect more than 90 nations, including some of the biggest US trading partners, like Canada and India. Tariffs on goods from Canada rose from 12.6% to 35%, while rates for India went from 2.7% to 50%. Several other countries also face particularly high tariffs, including Switzerland, whose fees jumped from 1.9% to 39%, and Brazil, which went from 1.3% to 50%. The US hit China with a 145% tariff in April, then reduced it to 30% while the countries are negotiating to try to keep the rate from spiking back up. The average tariff rate is now at its highest level since the Great Depression (period from 1929 to the late 1930s when poverty and unemployment soared).

Doug Ford

Why are they being implemented?

The overall purpose of tariffs is to earn money for the government and help American businesses. Trump said the new tariffs will reconfigure a global trading system that is unfair to the US. He wants to make it so expensive to bring goods into the US that companies will decide to make their products here instead, creating jobs and income for American workers. Trump implemented a first round of tariffs in April, which have brought in $152 billion for the government. That is double the amount generated over the same period last year.

What are the concerns?

Although tariffs are imposed on foreign countries, their governments don't pay them. Instead, the taxes are paid by the businesses that import the goods from those nations into the US. Companies often have to raise their prices to cover the cost, and those increases can be passed on to people who buy the items. Prices on some goods have risen since tariffs were set in April, and as a result, some people are buying less to save money.

Economic experts at Yale University in Connecticut predicted that prices will continue to increase by 37% on clothing, 12% on cars, and 3% on food. The US stock market (financial system that is an indicator of the health of a nation's economy) has been unsteady, and because the US is the world's largest economy, global stock markets have been affected as well.

The tariffs have also strained relations between the US and its long-term trading partners. Tourism to the US from countries like Canada, Mexico, and Germany has fallen by as much as 28% this year.

How did people react?

In addition to China, many other affected countries, including Switzerland, South Africa, and Taiwan, are trying to negotiate tariffs with the White House. But leaders of other nations pushed back. Doug Ford, a top government official in Canada, said his country will seek to boost trade with other countries and limit its reliance on the US. Meanwhile, people in India called for a boycott of American goods to protest the tariffs. Americans worried about rising prices stocked up on certain items. A National Retail Foundation survey found that 67% of people buying school supplies shopped early this year, with 51% of them saying they did so because of tariffs.

What will happen next?

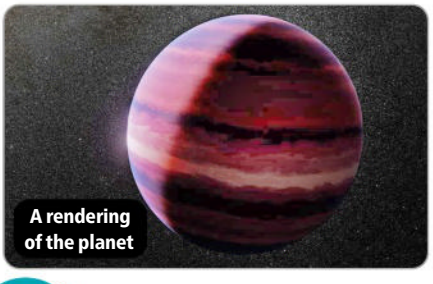
Countries will continue working with the White House to renegotiate tariffs. Economic experts said they will be watching carefully to see how tariff policies affect the US and global economies in the coming weeks and months. Trump said he is also considering tariffs on goods that are not currently affected, including airplanes, medicines, and computer parts.

Signs of nearby planet spotted

On August 7, NASA (the US space agency) said the James Webb Space Telescope had spotted evidence of a planet close to Earth. It was observed in a nearby star system (group of stars that are close together) called Alpha Centauri, about 4.5 light-years away. A light-year is the distance light travels in one Earth year, about 6 trillion miles.

Scientists said the planet appeared to be about the size of Saturn and made of gas. If it is confirmed to exist, it would be closer to its star than any other known planet. It would also be the closest planet spotted in the habitable zone (area where conditions could support life) of a star, although it would not support life as we know it.

Evidence of the planet was spotted in August 2024, but scientists have not been able to find it again. They said this isn't surprising, because the planet could be so close to the bright stars nearby that it's not currently visible. NASA said scientists will continue searching for signs of it, and they hope it will help them understand how planets form and survive in changing environments.



A rendering of the planet

TOP STOP
Pompeii is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Italy's second most visited tourist destination after the Colosseum, an ancient building in Rome.

About two thirds of the ruins of Pompeii have been dug up since the 1700s.

Pompeii lived on after massive eruption

In the year 79, a huge volcanic eruption destroyed Pompeii, Italy, a city of 10,000 to 20,000 people. Many residents died, while others fled. For years, archaeologists (scientists who study objects left by people long ago) believed that was the end of life in Pompeii. Now, however, there is evidence that survivors returned to settle in the ruins.

The eruption of Mount Vesuvius hit Pompeii so quickly that it buried the city about 20 feet deep in ash and lava. Pompeii was uncovered in the 1700s and became one of the world's most famous archaeological sites. Experts have spent years excavating it to learn about life in ancient times, digging through layers of soil and debris to reach the buildings and artifacts underneath.

But archaeologists wanting to learn more about what happened after the eruption suspected there were clues in the top layers that were usually tossed aside. Using a technique called stratigraphy, they sifted through them and uncovered signs of human activity, including ceramics, coins, and ovens, that could only have been left behind after the eruption.

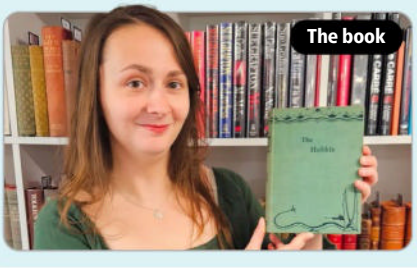
The researchers believe people with nowhere else to go returned to Pompeii and settled in a loose kind of community. They lived on the upper floors of damaged buildings, using the ash-filled lower floors below as storage, and searched for valuable items in the rubble. The settlement was "precarious" and "disorganized," the team said, and lasted until about the year 472.

"The picture is now clearer," said Gabriel Zuchtriegel, head of the Pompeii site. "We are unearthing everything forgotten by history."

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

A LUCKY FIND

Caitlin Riley, a rare books specialist in the UK, was amazed to find a first edition of *The Hobbit* by JRR Tolkien tucked away on a bookshelf. The copy sold for more than $58,000 at an auction. The discovery "feels like a miracle," Riley said.



The book

A GREAT RIDE

It was an epic journey for an 85-year-old from Oregon, who became the oldest man to cross America on a bike. Bob Sanders traveled 3,007 miles from California to Florida in 44 days, with stops along the way to take in the scenery, see old friends, and meet new ones. "I'm glad I did it," Sanders said.

Bob Sanders

HEADING HOME

A Kemp's ridley sea turtle named Elton was released into the ocean from a New York City beach. Elton, whose turtle species is critically endangered, was found ill on a Massachusetts shore and spent eight months at a marine facility in New York. "He's going to go hang out where other turtles are," a caregiver said.

Elton

ON THE COVER: GETTY IMAGES (3); DISNEY; LLSWS; ON THIS PAGE: GETTY IMAGES; NASA, ESA, CSA, STSCI, R. HURT (CALTECH/IPAC); AUCTIONEUM; GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS; GABRIELE HOLTERMANN; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

TIME FOR CLASS
The average school day in the US is between 6 and 7 hours per day, usually starting at about 8 a.m. and ending at about 2 p.m.
Students may notice changes to their school's policies this year.

Cursive on the rise

Kentucky is the latest state to require students to learn cursive—a style of writing that joins letters together. Less than 10 years ago, 14 states mandated it. Now 24 states have requirements in place to teach it. Proponents say learning to form cursive letters can enhance literacy and brain development.

Schools reopening with new policies

As students return to school for the 2025–26 academic year, many of them are being welcomed back with changes focused on improving learning. Some of the policies have already been enacted, and others will be put into place at a later date.

What's happening with cell phones?

New York passed a law in May that requires its schools to be free of cell phones and other personal electronic devices from "bell to bell" starting this academic year. It joins 13 other states, including Florida, Georgia, and Virginia, that have banned or restricted cell phone use in schools. Other states, such as California and Oregon, have guidelines that limit cell phone use during school hours. The goal of the restrictions is to reduce distractions and make it easier for students to focus on learning, lawmakers said. About 72% of teachers in one survey agreed that phones are a major distraction in the classroom.

What is the new fitness test?

Following an executive order issued by President Donald Trump in July, the Presidential Fitness Test will be administered to students nationwide this year. The test, which originated in the 1950s and was phased out in 2013 in favor of a program that focused on overall student health, involves a one-mile run, sit-ups, and other exercises. While some fitness experts applauded the return of the test, others said the competitive nature of the test doesn't improve overall health and could be unfair to some students.

How are health screenings changing?

Public schools must provide vision and hearing exams to students, and nearly 33% of schools voluntarily screen for mental health conditions, such as anxiety. On July 31, Illinois became the first state to require these mental health assessments, effective with the 2026–2027 school year.

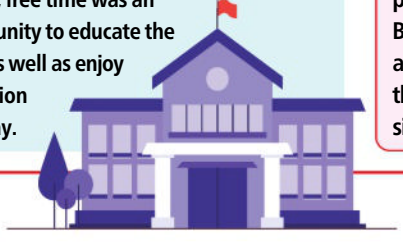
How is recess changing?

Some states let schools decide how much recess to provide, while others set a minimum daily requirement, often 20 to 30 minutes. In Tennessee, a new law took effect on July 1 mandating that K–5 students get at least 40 minutes of recess each day, an increase from the previous requirement of 140 minutes a week. Recess can enhance memory and concentration, among other benefits, studies show.

WORD OF THE WEEK

SCHOOL

We may not associate school with relaxation, but the word began with the Greek *skholē*, which meant "leisure," as well as a "place for lectures." For many ancient Greeks, free time was an opportunity to educate the mind as well as enjoy recreation and play.

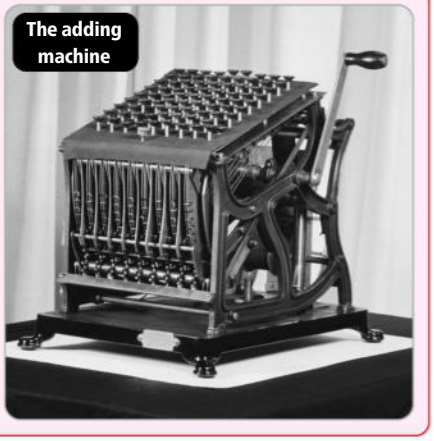


THE WEEK IN HISTORY

August 21, 1888

Adding machine is patented

On August 21, 1888, William Seward Burroughs, a bank clerk in Missouri, received patents for his invention of an adding machine, a type of early calculator. The patents, issued by the US government, gave Burroughs the right to produce and sell his adding machine, which was more reliable than others. It went on to save bank clerks significant time when counting money.


The adding machine

Northern Pintail ducks

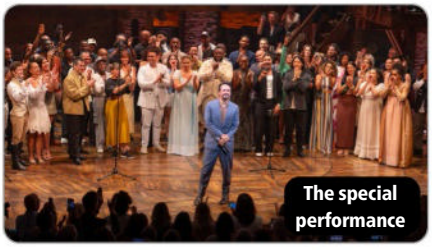
Migrating birds to be protected

The US will spend more than $100 million to conserve about 578,000 acres of wetlands, the Department of the Interior (DOI, the agency that conserves land) announced. Migratory birds, such as ducks, rely on wetlands for food and shelter during their long flights. An additional $201 million from private groups will go toward the effort. DOI said the funds will help maintain healthy populations of birds and support traditions such as bird-watching.

Jen Pawol

Female umpire makes history

Jen Pawol became the first woman to umpire regular-season MLB (Major League Baseball) games during a series between the Miami Marlins and Atlanta Braves in Atlanta. Pawol umpired at first base on August 9 and at home plate on August 11. Since 2016, she has umpired about 1,200 Minor League games. "The dream actually came true today," she said after her first MLB game.


The special performance

Memorable night on Broadway

On August 6, the musical *Hamilton* celebrated the 10th anniversary of its opening on Broadway in New York City. A sold-out performance, featuring a curtain call with creator Lin-Manuel Miranda and other original cast members, raised money to support artists. Since its debut in 2015, the groundbreaking show has sold more than 4 million tickets and earned more than $1 billion in revenue.

GETTY IMAGES (4); COURTESY THE PUBLISHER; HEATHER GERSHONOWITZ; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4)

HORSE HISTORY
The horses on Assateague Island were most likely brought there in the 17th century by people who wanted to avoid taxation of livestock.

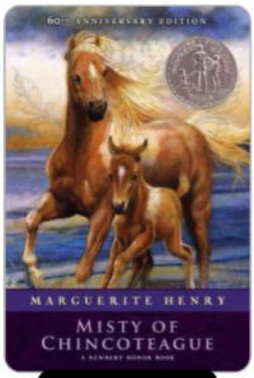
The wild horses arriving on shore after their swim

Anniversary of pony swim marked

Thousands of visitors from across the country gathered to watch the 100th anniversary of the Chincoteague pony swim on July 30. About 200 horses, guided by firefighters, crossed the Assateague Channel to arrive at Chincoteague Island in Virginia.

The crossing is held during a time of day known as "slack tide" (when the water level is lower) to ensure the horses' safety. Some visitors viewed the swim, which takes about five minutes, from kayaks and charter boats in the channel. A pony auction (sale involving bidding) was held the next day.

The horses live in the wild on Assateague Island, which is located between Virginia and Maryland. The animals that live on the Maryland side are known as Assateague horses, while the Virginia animals are called Chincoteague ponies. The Virginia herd is managed by the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company, which also sponsors the event.



The famous novel

The swim and auction were first held in 1925 to raise money for the fire company after several blazes damaged the town of Chincoteague. The event was made famous by the best-selling 1947 novel *Misty of Chincoteague* by Marguerite Henry. The story, based on a real horse, follows two children who want a horse of their own. It was adapted into a movie in 1961.

Over the years, the event has drawn criticism from animal rights activists who argue that the auction is cruel to the horses. The fire company has responded by saying they are sold to prevent overpopulation on the island, which would be unsafe for the animals. Some of the money raised at the auction goes to providing veterinary care for the herd.

The auction raised more than $1 million, fire officials said. One bidder paid $100,000 for a "buyback pony," which is a pony that's returned to the island. On August 1, the annual pony swim to return the herd to Assateague Island took place.

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Wayward sea lion found wandering in California road" *UPI*

Around the world

Benjamin Von Wong (left) next to his art

Geneva, Switzerland
Nations meet about plastic pollution

On August 5, representatives from 184 nations began a 10-day meeting in Geneva to create a legally binding treaty to reduce plastic pollution. While some countries want to limit plastic production, others argued that it's enough to reuse, recycle, and redesign plastic products. Outside the talks, artist Benjamin Von Wong installed *The Thinker's Burden*, a replica of Auguste Rodin's sculpture *The Thinker* covered with plastic garbage.

The shoe

Oaxaca, Mexico
Apology for copied shoe design

US fashion designer Willy Chavarría apologized after his Adidas Original shoes were criticized for copying traditional sandals made by a Mexican Indigenous group (first people to inhabit a place) without giving them credit. Mexican politicians said the community should benefit when a company uses its designs. According to Mexican official Marina Núñez Bespalova, Adidas has contacted leaders in Oaxaca to discuss making amends.

A masked dancer

Porto-Novo, Benin
Mask festival embraces heritage

Thousands gathered in Benin's capital city for the vibrant Mask Festival, which showcases the country's unique wooden masks. Rooted in Vodun, a West African religion, the masks are used to represent the spirits of ancestors. Costumed performers danced to drums at the annual event, which also showcased local crafts and cuisine to international visitors.

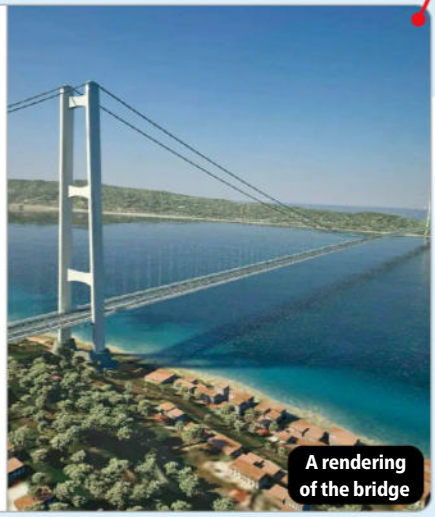
Paris, France
Honor for newspaper seller

France's last newspaper hawker (person who walks the streets selling newspapers) will soon be given the Order of Merit, one of the country's highest honors. Ali Akbar has been selling papers in Paris since 1973. His job is more difficult now, he says. "Everything is digital," Akbar told BBC News. "People just want to consult their telephones."

Ali Akbar

Italy
Plan for world's longest suspension bridge

More than 50 years after plans were first proposed, construction of the world's longest suspension bridge was approved. The two-mile bridge from Italy's mainland to the island of Sicily will cost $15.7 billion to build. With a road and railway held up by cables, it will reduce crossing time to a 10-minute drive instead of a 100-minute ferry ride. The project still needs approval from residents and environmental agencies.


A rendering of the bridge

GETTY IMAGES (4); REUTERS (2); ALAMY (2); WEBUILD; WILLY CHAVARRIA/ADIDAS ORIGINAL

Around the world

Ulf Kristersson

Sweden
Leader criticized for using AI

Swedish prime minister Ulf Kristersson has faced criticism after saying he often consults artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, for a second opinion on his decisions. AI is a computer system that imitates human learning. Experts warn against basing decisions on information provided by AI because it can contain mistakes.

Mountain climbers in Nepal

Nepal
Change in costs to climb mountains

For the next two years, Nepal will stop charging fees to climb nearly 100 peaks in its northwestern Himalayan mountains. These peaks range from 19,590 to 23,399 feet high. Meanwhile, fees for the popular Mount Everest, in the country's northeast, will increase for the first time in nearly 10 years. Officials hope the changes will encourage adventurers to explore less-visited areas and boost tourism in Nepal's poorest regions.

Tributes in Hiroshima

Hiroshima, Japan
Anniversary of atomic bomb observed

Officials from around the world gathered on August 9 for a ceremony marking 80 years since the first atomic bomb was used in war. During World War II, in 1945, the US dropped the powerful nuclear weapon on Hiroshima, killing about 70,000 people instantly and injuring thousands more. During the ceremony, Hiroshima's mayor, Kazumi Matsui, said the world should "learn from the tragedies of history."

People walk in deep snow.

New South Wales, Australia
Heaviest snowfall in 40 years

Several towns in the state of New South Wales have experienced their heaviest snowfall in decades. Some areas received up to16 inches—the most since the mid-1980s. The weather caused power outages, and some vehicles were stuck in the snow. Many locals enjoyed the unusual weather, however, and went out to build snowmen and have snowball fights.

Guangdong, China
Virus outbreak

Nearly 8,000 cases of chikungunya virus have been reported in China's Guangdong province since July. The virus spreads when a mosquito bites an infected person and then bites someone else. The disease can cause a fever, skin rashes, and joint pain but is usually not deadly. Chinese officials have been spraying chemicals called insecticides to kill mosquitoes, and authorities report that the number of cases is now declining.

Spraying insecticide

Should all schools start after Labor Day?

Many schools open in July or August, but some families say September is better.

What you need to know

- **Labor Day always falls on the first Monday of September.**
- **About 47% of US schools are back in session before August 16, while about 35% open in the last two weeks of August and 16% begin after September 1, according to weareteachers.com.**
- **Schools in the South, Southwest, and West—like Florida, Texas, and California—typically begin earlier than those in the Northwest, Upper Midwest, and East Coast.**

CLASS BEGINS
Chandler Unified School District in Arizona has one of the earliest start dates in the US. Students went back on July 16 this year.

Where you live in the US determines when your school year begins. At one time, school start dates were based on the local climate (hot or cool) and the location (urban or rural area). In rural states, most schools opened after Labor Day and closed in mid-spring. This allowed farms to operate on schedule and let kids help out. As the US became less agricultural, schools started opening earlier, weeks before Labor Day. Not everyone thinks this is a good idea, and some states now want to move the start of school to after Labor Day so the summer vacation lasts a little longer. What do you think? Should all schools start after Labor Day?

Yes—give everyone a real break

Kids and teachers deserve a long summer break, with time for the beach, bike riding, and other fun activities. Many families plan vacations around the Labor Day weekend, and they go to places that rely on tourism to bring in millions of dollars for their communities. Teens also use those weeks to earn money at seasonal jobs at amusement parks, camps, pools, and ice cream shops. Finally, it's silly to have so many different school schedules within one country. It means some kids might miss out on the beginning or end of summer sports or sleepaway camp, and it makes it hard to plan visits with extended family or friends who live far apart.

No—starting earlier is better

Most schools that start their year in July or August get to end it early too—in May. That gives everyone a head start on summer. While students in other parts of the US are still at their desks in the middle to end of June, kids who got out in May have already had a full month off. Going back before Labor Day also has academic advantages. An early start date gives teachers more time to teach before statewide testing begins, for example. In addition, schools that open before Labor Day get to have more frequent breaks throughout the year, giving students and teachers more free time to enjoy all four seasons.

YES Three reasons all schools should start after Labor Day

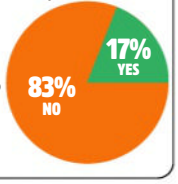
1. **Kids and teachers deserve a long break to enjoy everything summer has to offer.**
2. **Families plan vacations around Labor Day, and communities depend on tourism—and teen workers.**
3. **There should be one schedule for the whole country so kids don't miss out on sports, camp, or visits with loved ones.**

NO Three reasons all schools should not start after Labor Day

1. **Kids who start school early also end it early and get a head start on summer.**
2. **Teachers have more instructional time before statewide testing begins, so students can perform their best.**
3. **Starting the school year early allows students and teachers to take more frequent breaks throughout the year.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked whether Superman is the greatest superhero. Most of you said the classic crime-fighter is not the best: 83% said no, and 17% said yes.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think all schools should start after Labor Day or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

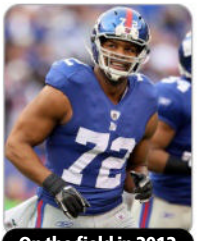
GETTY IMAGES

Inspiring young athletes

Osi Umenyiora is on a mission to spread the positive power of football.

Former football star and two-time Super Bowl champion Osi Umenyiora is making an impact off the field as the NFL's lead ambassador in Africa. He is dedicated to helping teens chase their sports dreams.

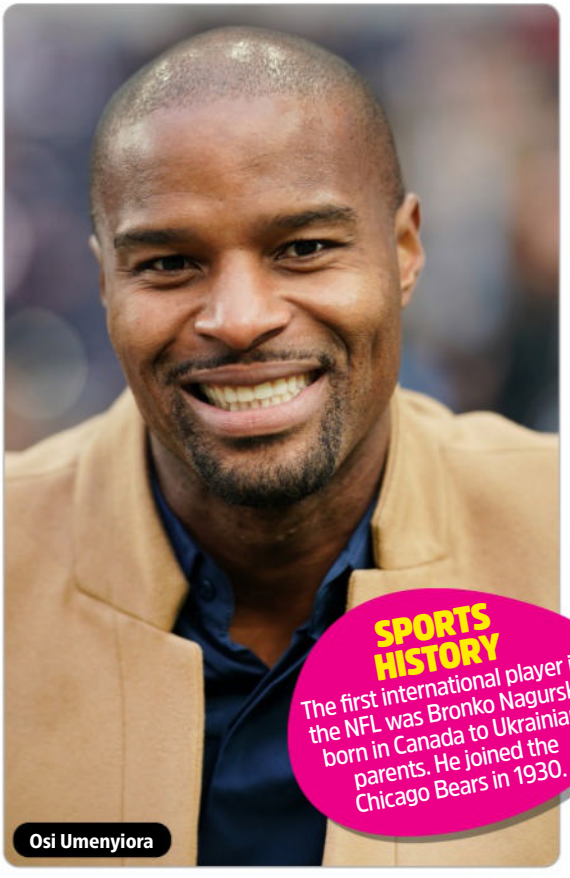
Born in England, Umenyiora moved to Nigeria at age 7. Four years later, his family moved to the US, settling in Alabama. He began playing football in 11th grade and quickly stood out for his strength, speed, and determination. Umenyiora went on to play at Troy State University in Alabama, where he set college records and was named an All-American player.


On the field in 2012

In 2003, Umenyiora was drafted by the New York Giants as a defensive end. He became one of the NFL's top defensive players and was selected to the Pro Bowl (the league's all-star game) in 2005 and 2007. He helped the Giants win Super Bowls in 2008 and 2012, then played his final two seasons with the Atlanta Falcons before retiring in 2015.

Hoping to provide the same mentorship and opportunities football gave him, Umenyiora cofounded The Uprise, an NFL-backed scouting program to develop talent in Africa, in 2020. He travels to Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and Egypt to support and recruit players for the NFL, and his efforts have expanded the league's diversity. In the NFL 2024–2025 season, there were 130 players of African descent.

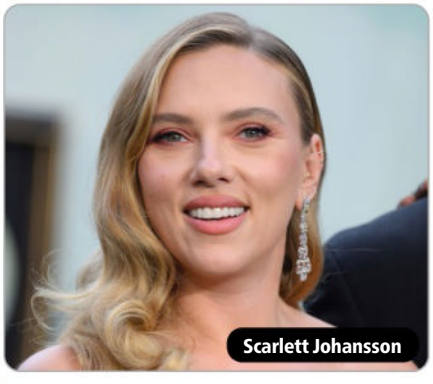
Umenyiora is also working to grow flag football, a safer, faster version that makes the game more accessible in Africa. With flag football debuting at the 2028 Olympics, he hopes to see an African team compete. "We're just looking to keep moving around Africa, giving the same opportunities to different athletes everywhere," Umenyiora told *The Athletic*.


Osi Umenyiora

SPORTS HISTORY
The first international player in the NFL was Bronko Nagurski, born in Canada to Ukrainian parents. He joined the Chicago Bears in 1930.

Box-office superstar

Scarlett Johansson is now Hollywood's highest-grossing star of all time, thanks to her role in *Jurassic World Rebirth*, which has earned $766 million worldwide. Her films have collectively grossed $14.61 billion. Johansson, who began acting at age 8, is best known for playing Black Widow in the Marvel movies, which rank among her biggest box-office hits. She remembers seeing the first *Jurassic* movie as a child and hopes kids enjoy this new one. "It makes you dream," she told *People*.


Scarlett Johansson

Greg LeMond

Sports icon honored

Greg LeMond, one of America's most successful cyclists, was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, one of the nation's highest civilian honors. LeMond made history in 1986 as the first American and non-European to win the Tour de France, the most prestigious race in men's cycling. After an accident in 1987, he made a stunning comeback in 1989 and won by eight seconds, the closest finish in race history, then won again in 1990. The medal recognizes his contributions to the nation. At the ceremony, he said the honor belongs to everyone who supported him along the way.

OVERHEARD

"Change happens when people are the ones who make it happen."
Legendary civil rights activist Dolores Huerta on a lesson she learned from more than 50 years of organizing for justice

SHUTTERSTOCK; GETTY IMAGES (4)

A scimitar-horned oryx

The IUCN Red List

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species documents the risk status of wildlife. Species are put into categories, including "extinct," "critically endangered" (like the vaquita, below), and "least concern," which is for species that are doing well. The IUCN also has a Green Status list of recoveries.

Endangered species can be saved

A new study has laid out what world leaders must do to save the most endangered species from extinction. The research focuses on the 10,443 species of animals, plants, and fungi (living things like mushrooms, mold, and mildew) that are considered to be "critically endangered" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (see box, above). These species are the closest to going extinct out of all those that still exist in the wild.

Partula snails

The study found that about 80% of critically endangered species are mainly threatened by habitat loss. Other threats to species on the list include climate change and diseases, such as one caused by the chytrid fungus that has affected amphibian populations around the world. Another threat comes from invasive species, which are non-native species that cause harm after they are introduced to an area.

Rikki Gumbs, a coauthor of the study, said the good news is that humans have the power to change the situation. The study lists some of the actions that world leaders should take to help critically endangered species. These include spending money on training people to protect habitats and getting more people—especially local communities—involved in animal conservation work.

Gumbs is a researcher at ZSL, a conservation organization that runs Whipsnade Zoo and London Zoo in the UK. He said ZSL's projects show what can be done to help endangered species recover. The organization's work includes returning animals that were extinct in the wild to their natural homes after zoos conduct breeding programs to boost their population. For example, the group has reintroduced scimitar-horned oryx (a type of antelope) onto grasslands in Chad and released 17,000 tiny Partula snails on the Pacific islands of French Polynesia.

"We can turn potential tragedies into inspirational success stories," he said. "That's exactly why we've mapped out where we need to see urgent global investment of time and resources in order to solve this crisis and build a brighter future for all life on Earth."

PLACE OF THE WEEK

Mount Washington State Park, New Hampshire

At more than 6,200 feet tall, Mount Washington is the highest peak in the northeastern US. It's also considered one of the windiest places in the world. Visitors can hike to the summit, take photos, and on a clear day gaze at more than 100 miles of the American landscape. The state park sits on top of the mountain, which is surrounded by 800,000 acres of the White Mountain National Forest. Visitors to the mountain are likely to hear the song of the white-throated sparrow. Ravens and crows have also been spotted there, as have bobcats, bears, and moose.

A crow

BIG REACH
The arms of orangutans are one and a half times as long as their legs.

An orangutan gets some rest.

Orangutans sleep like humans

Scientists have discovered that orangutans share some sleeping habits with humans. A study found that these great apes make up for a poor night's sleep with daytime naps.

Scientists from the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior studied 53 adult orangutans in Indonesia's Suaq Balimbing rainforest for 455 days. They observed that the apes got about 13 hours of sleep per night in "night nests," which they built each evening using branches and leaves.

When their sleep was disrupted by cold weather, noisy neighbors, or a long day of travel, the animals responded by taking a nap during the day, just as humans do. Orangutans napped on 41% of the days, with naps averaging 76 minutes. Naps took place in "day nests," which the apes could put together in less than two minutes.

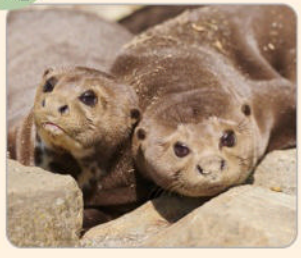
For every hour of missed sleep at night, orangutans added five to 10 minutes to their daytime nap. The researchers think these periods of rest may restore the creatures' sleep-deprived brains and help them use their intelligence more effectively.

Animal of the week: Black-tailed prairie dog

A study revealed that black-tailed prairie dogs help long-billed curlew birds avoid predators. When the rodents see a predator, they call out a barklike alarm and dive underground. Curlews listen for the warning too.

- **LIFE SPAN:** 3 to 5 years
- **HABITAT:** Flat grasslands in North America
- **SIZE:** 11 to 13 inches long, up to 4 pounds
- **DIET:** Mostly grass and leafy plants
- **FUN FACT:** Prairie dogs live in "towns"—vast tunnel networks connecting many family burrows.

Good week / Bad week



Giant river otters

This species has returned to Argentina's Iberá Wetlands for the first time in 40 years. Experts have released a family of otters, including two babies that were born in captivity. They plan to reintroduce more otters in the future.

Blue crabs

An annual survey of blue crabs in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay recorded one of the lowest population levels ever. Officials say this might be due to pollution, climate change, and the spread of invasive blue catfish that eat crabs.

Ask an expert: "Why do birds chirp in the morning?" Zayn, 9, Pennsylvania

Alex Waier
Curator of birds,
Milwaukee County Zoo

There are many theories about the springtime "dawn chorus." Most likely, birds are marking their territory early in the day—saying, "This is my space!" They could also be attracting mates. Another theory is that the quiet, calm, humid air of the morning allows birdcalls to travel farther.

A meadowlark sings at sunrise.

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about the Milwaukee County Zoo at milwaukeezoo.org.

ALAMY; GETTY IMAGES (4); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (5)

Illuminating beacons

Lighthouses are enduring symbols of guidance, hope, and safety.

For hundreds of years, lighthouses have brightened the way for sailors. Now they are also beloved landmarks around the world.

A lighthouse flashes at night.

Beacons of light

Lighthouses are towers that have a powerful rotating or flashing light at the top. They can be found on coastal areas or islands, where they were built to help ship captains navigate in and out of harbors while avoiding reefs, rocks, and uneven coastlines, especially at night or during stormy weather. They're typically constructed of stone, brick, or reinforced concrete to withstand salt water and winds. A lighthouse also has a foghorn or other sound signal, which serves as a warning in murky weather conditions, such as dense fog.

The Tower of Hercules

From firepits to lanterns

One of the first known lighthouses, the Pharos of Alexandria, dates back to about 280 BCE in Alexandria, Egypt. It was approximately 450 feet tall and featured a large, open firepit at its summit. As ancient Romans (753 BCE to 476 CE) expanded their empire, they built lighthouses. One of them, the Tower of Hercules in Spain, erected in the first century CE, is the oldest known Roman lighthouse still in use today. In the 1600s, increasing ship traffic led to the construction of more lighthouses. By the 1700s, oil and gas lanterns began replacing firepits to light the way. For centuries, lighthouses had keepers who lived on-site or nearby and kept their lights aflame.

STANDING FOR FREEDOM
The Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor was designated as a lighthouse from 1886 to 1902.

Lighthouses of the world

Saudi Arabia

Jeddah Light (right), a modern lighthouse facing the Red Sea, measures about 436 feet high, making it the tallest one on Earth.

Brazil

Built in 1861 in the city of Aracaju, Sergipe Lighthouse (right) stands about 131 feet tall. Known for its distinctive black and white colors and square tower, it is still in operation today.

GETTY IMAGES (8); SHUTTERSTOCK

on the shore

EYE SPY
Many lighthouses feature daymarks—designs such as spirals, diamonds, and stripes—to help sailors spot them on the horizon.

LAND OF LIGHT
Michigan has about 130 lighthouses—more than any other state in the US.

Portland Head Light, Maine's oldest lighthouse, was first lit in 1791.

A Fresnel lens

Shining bright in the US

In 1716, the first lighthouse in America, Boston Light, was built on Little Brewster Island in Boston, Massachusetts. In 1789, the federal government created the US Lighthouse Establishment, which was responsible for maintaining the nation's lighthouses. The Fresnel lens, which magnified light from a lamp and beamed it for miles, was invented in 1822. In 1841, the Navesink Lighthouse, also called Twin Lights, in New Jersey became the first US lighthouse to use it. In 1854, the first lighthouse on the West Coast was built on Alcatraz Island, California. By the early 20th century, about 1,000 lighthouses were operating in the US. In 1939, the US Coast Guard assumed oversight of lighthouses. From the 1960s to 1990s, lighthouse operations became automated.

Cape Hatteras Lighthouse

Lighthouses today

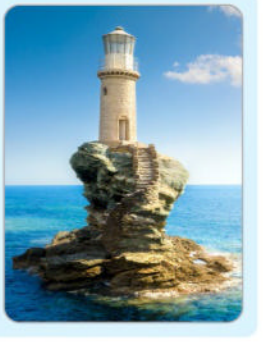
There are now more than 20,000 lighthouses around the world (see box at left). Of the1,500 lighthouses built throughout US history, 779 are currently standing, according to the US Lighthouse Society, and 50 of those are still operated by the US government. The tallest lighthouse in the nation is the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in North Carolina, at about 198 feet tall. Although advances in navigation, such as radar and sonar, have replaced the original purpose of lighthouses, they still play a valuable role in seafaring as visual landmarks and backup navigational systems. Many US lighthouses have been converted into historic sites or museums that allow visitors to climb their staircases to the top for a view.

Turkey

Initially erected in 408 BCE, the Maiden's Tower (right) was rebuilt during Ottoman rule in 1453. It now functions as a museum and a monument to the history and culture of the city of Istanbul.

Greece

Perched on a rock formation, the first Tourlitis Lighthouse was built in 1897. It was destroyed in World War II (1939–1945). A replica (right), constructed in the 1990s, was Greece's first automated lighthouse.



Dr. Vipul Patel and the robotic surgery console

WORD PLAY
"Robot" comes from the Czech word *robota*, which means "labor" and was first used by Czech playwright Karel Čapek in a play in 1920.

Long-distance robot surgery is a success

A doctor in Florida successfully operated on a patient 7,000 miles away in Africa, using a remote-controlled robot to perform the surgery. Fernando Da Silva, who lives in Angola, needed surgery to treat cancer (a collection of diseases caused by cells that grow out of control).

In a robotic surgical procedure, the surgeon does not touch the patient. Instead, the doctor moves their hands to control smaller robotic hands that hold surgical instruments and make contact with the patient. When the doctor moves their hands around, the robotic hands move in the same way.

The doctor performs surgery.

Da Silva's procedure, called "transcontinental robotic telesurgery," was performed by Dr. Vipul Patel from Florida. He sat at a robotic console equipped with a 3D screen and highly responsive hand controls. His movements were transmitted through fiber-optic cables that run under the ocean to robotic arms in the operating room in Angola. Fiber-optic technology transmits data faster and farther than other communication methods.

Patel has performed nearly 20,000 robotic surgeries, but he is usually at a console in the same room as the patient. He said that despite the distance, there was no noticeable delay between his movements and the response of the robotic arms. The entire process took about one hour and 20 minutes.

Although Patel was in the US, his medical team was in the operating room in Angola with Da Silva. "I always have my team where the patient is," Patel said. "So, in case something happened with the telecommunications, the team would just take over and finish the case and do it safely." The team did not need to intervene, however, as Da Silva's surgery was a success.

The procedure was part of a clinical trial approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the government agency that promotes and protects public health. Patel said he plans to perform more surgeries like this one and present the results to the FDA for review.

Patel said he believes robotic technology will allow doctors to perform surgery around the world and help people in rural or less wealthy areas, where access to medical care is limited. He hopes it can also be used to help people who are experiencing medical emergencies, like heart attacks and strokes.

Robots helping doctors

A da Vinci surgical robot at work

The first robotic surgery in the US took place in 1985, when the PUMA 560 system was used for a brain operation. Da Vinci, the first system for general use, was approved by the FDA in 2000. Now the technology is used for a wide range of procedures, from cancer treatments to medical emergencies. In the US, there were an estimated 1.12 million robotic surgical procedures in 2020, and 22% of all surgeries used robot-assisted technology.

Medical experts say robotic surgery technology has many benefits for patients, including less invasive procedures, fewer complications, faster recovery time, and shorter hospital stays. Many robotic systems are also beginning to incorporate artificial intelligence (AI, when a computer imitates human learning) to help guide doctors.

First plant species added to Frozen Zoo

The San Diego Zoo in California has added the first samples of a plant species to its Frozen Zoo. The biological bank—or biobank—is dedicated to protecting and preserving the world's wildlife. The plant was an endangered tree called Nuttall's scrub oak.

The Frozen Zoo collects living cells and reproductive material from mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and plants. Using a technique called cryopreservation, the samples are frozen and stored at -320° F. At that temperature, the cells are safely preserved and can also be revived if needed. The cryopreservation method is meant to prevent the loss of a species in the future.

In the Frozen Zoo lab

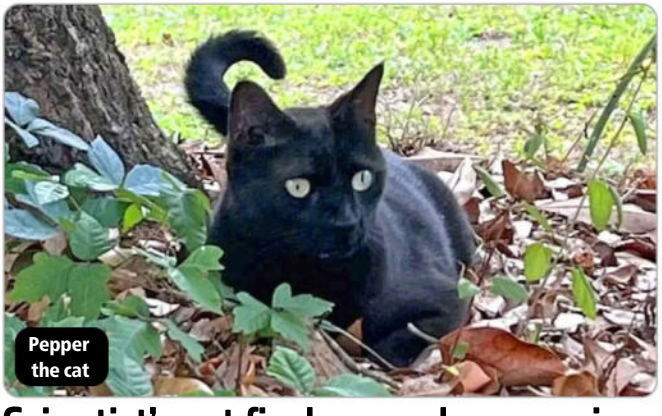
Nuttall's scrub oak is native to San Diego and one of about 450 oak species in the world. Oaks are keystone species, meaning they support hundreds of other species in their ecosystem (a group of plants and animals that affect one another). But nearly a third of oak species are at risk of disappearing, and preserving them is difficult because their seeds cannot be stored in standard seed banks.

The addition of Nuttall's scrub oak was "an enormous accomplishment for plant conservation" that could also help other species in the future, said Christy Powell, a San Diego Zoo official. "Cryopreservation offers us an incredible tool to ensure their survival—alongside habitat protections and living collections."

A Nuttall's scrub oak at a nature preserve in San Diego

SPECIAL PLACE

The Frozen Zoo in California was founded in 1975 and holds 11,500 cell samples from more than 1,300 species.



Pepper the cat

Scientist's cat finds an unknown virus

A scientist has his cat to thank for a discovery—for the second time. John Lednicky studies viruses at the University of Florida. In 2021, his cat Pepper caught a mouse. Lednicky took the rodent to his lab and found that it had a virus that had not previously been spotted in the US.

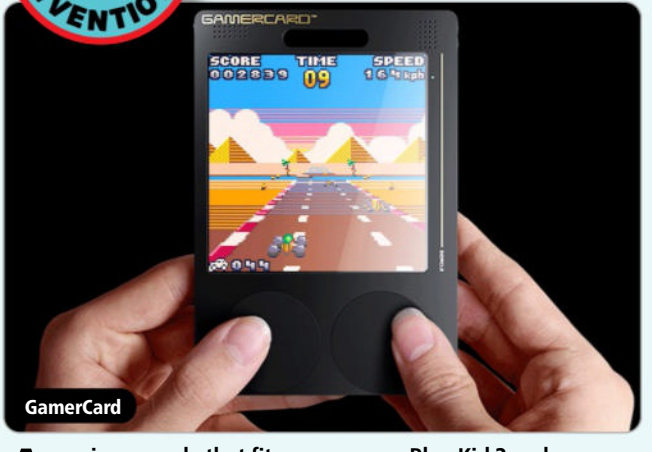
Recently, Pepper caught an Everglades short-tailed shrew and brought it home. Lednicky studied it and spotted a never-before-seen strain (type) of an Orthoreovirus.

This group of viruses is well known but poorly understood. They spread through air or poop and can infect birds and mammals, including humans, white-tailed deer, and bats. Orthoreoviruses can cause issues in the brain and digestive system.

Lednicky said it's important to identify as many strains of a virus as possible. This will help scientists learn how to treat people and animals if they get sick. Pepper, meanwhile, has remained healthy.

AMAZING INVENTION

A gaming device that's super small



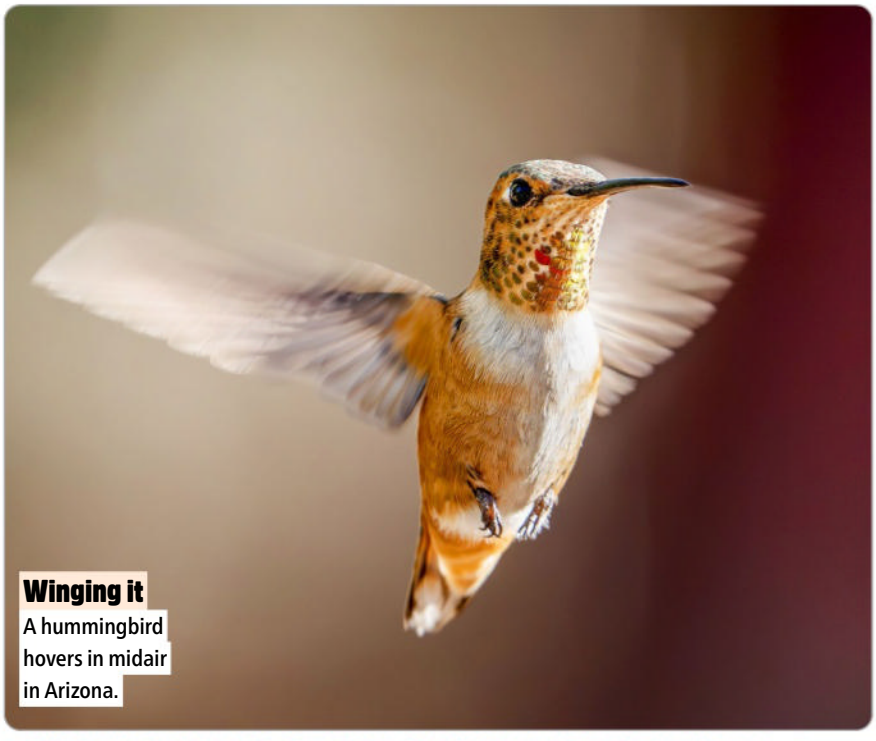
GamerCard

A gaming console that fits in the palm of your hand makes it easy to play on the go. At 5 inches wide, about 3.5 inches high, and a quarter of an inch thick, the GamerCard can run thousands of games from multiple systems. It also comes preloaded with the games Bloo Kid 2 and AstroBlaze DX.

GamerCard is light but contains a powerful processor and has a full-color display, speakers, and control pads and switches. Young programmers can also use the device to develop their own games.

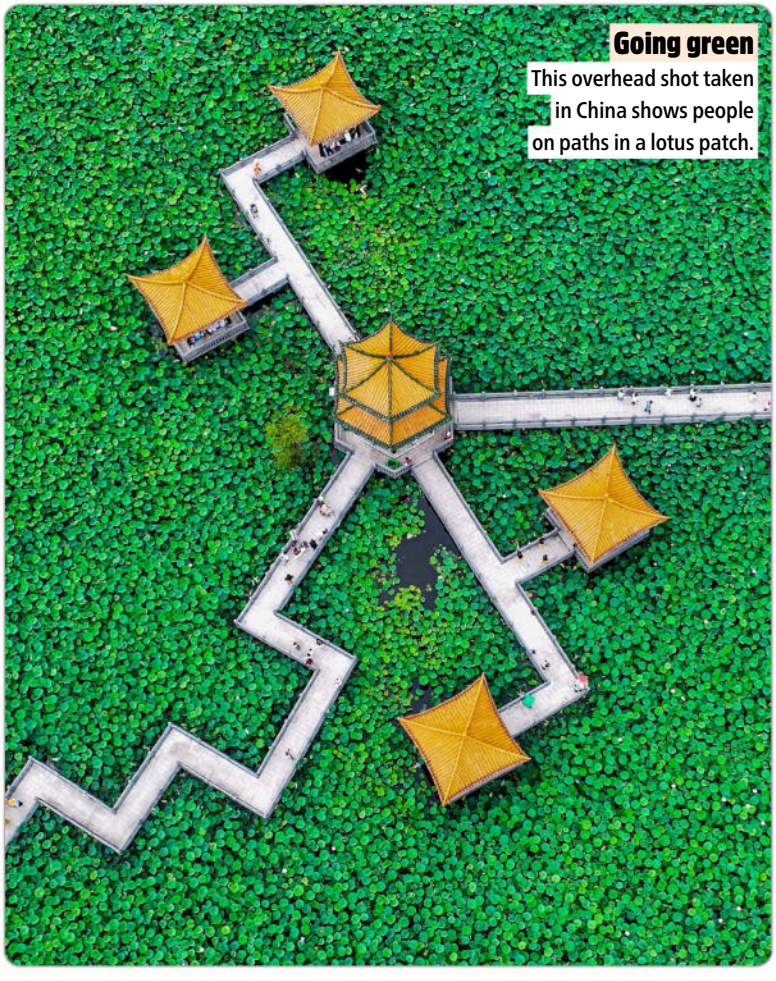
ON RIGHT PAGE: SAN DIEGO ZOO WILDLIFE ALLIANCE; JOHN LEDNICKY; GRANT SINCLAIR; ON LEFT PAGE: DR. VIPUL PATEL (3)

Photos of the week



Winging it
A hummingbird hovers in midair in Arizona.

Fruit loops
Fresh dates are displayed at a festival in Qatar.



Going green
This overhead shot taken in China shows people on paths in a lotus patch.

GETTY IMAGES (6)

Photos of the week

Bugging out
This close-up of an ant on a flower was taken in France.

Vibrant scene
Colorful rocks provide a backdrop for hot-air balloon rides in China.

Taking flight
A Welsh corgi tackles an obstacle course at a dog show in Canada.

The Pennsylvania team

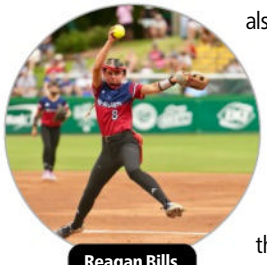
DID YOU KNOW?
Teams from Texas have won a total of 14 Little League Softball World Series titles, the most of any state.

Pro softball news

The AUSL (Athletes Unlimited Softball League) All-Star Cup is taking place this month. It features 60 top players from the women's pro league competing on teams that change each week. The remaining games will be played in Rosemont, Illinois.

New champion in Little League softball

From August 3 to 10, girls from the US and other countries gathered in Greenville, North Carolina, to compete in the Little League Softball World Series (LLSWS), the world's largest youth softball tournament. In the championship game on August 10, West Suburban Little League from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, defeated Floyds Knob Community Club Little League from Indiana, 1–0. The victory marked the first time a team from Pennsylvania has won the LLSWS title since 1978.



Reagan Bills

Throughout the summer, teams from around the country, made up of girls ages 10 to 12, participated in district, section, state, and regional tournaments to determine the eight US teams that would compete at the LLSWS tournament. The Pennsylvania team won the Mid-Atlantic region, while the Indiana team won the Central region. Teams from Canada, Latin America, Europe-Africa, and Asia-Pacific competed in their own regional tournaments, and those four champions also qualified for the LLSWS. The 12 qualifying teams were split into two brackets, and the winners of each bracket played for the title.

This year was the first time a team from Pennsylvania's West Suburban Little League made it to the LLSWS. The roster was made up of the best players from several teams within Cambria County. The team entered the final undefeated after beating a team from Tulsa, Oklahoma, 4–0, in their bracket's championship game. Meanwhile, Indiana won their bracket by defeating last year's LLSWS champions, a team from North Carolina, 2–0, in a game that required one extra inning.

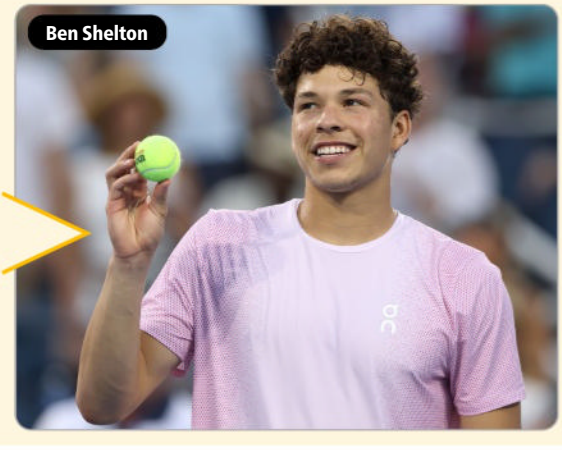
The star of the championship game was Pennsylvania's Reagan Bills. Not only did she pitch a complete game, but she also hit a single in the bottom of the fourth inning to drive in the only run. In her first four innings on the mound, she allowed one hit and one walk. In the top of the fifth, Indiana loaded the bases and had two outs when Bills caught a line drive to make the third out and hold her opponents scoreless. In the top of the sixth, she retired Indiana's batters in order to secure the win.

Afterward, Bills was named the Most Valuable Player of the game. She spoke about becoming a LLSWS champion and said, "I can't believe it! It has been awesome. I have been watching since I was 5, and I didn't think this was possible."

THIS WEEK'S WINNERS...

TENNIS

Ben Shelton of the US won the men's singles title at the Canadian Open on August 7. He is the first American player to win there since 2003. It is his first title at an ATP Masters 1,000 event (top competitions on the men's tennis tour), and it bumped him up to number six in the world rankings. The women's singles champion was Canadian Victoria Mboko, age 18. It is her first title on the women's tour.



Ben Shelton

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Seattle Mariners star Cal Raleigh hit his 45th home run this season in a 6–3 win over the Tampa Bay Rays on August 10. He leads the league in homers this year.

BASKETBALL

In WNBA action on August 10, last year's MVP, A'ja Wilson of the Las Vegas Aces, scored 32 points and grabbed 20 rebounds in a 94–86 win over the Connecticut Sun. She is the first WNBA player ever to rack up at least 30 points and at least 20 rebounds in a game.

Asher Hong (left) and Hezly Rivera

LOOKING AHEAD
The 2025 Artistic Gymnastics World Championships will take place in Jakarta, Indonesia, in October.

Gymnasts shine at US nationals

The 2025 US Gymnastics Championships took place from August 7 to August 10 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Nearly 140 top gymnasts gathered to compete for national titles and earn places on the US Junior and Senior National Teams. The senior women's all-around champion was Hezly Rivera, a member of the gold-medal-winning US team at the 2024 Paris Olympics. For the second time in three years, the senior men's all-around champion was Asher Hong, a bronze medalist in Paris.

Rivera, age 17, is the youngest US all-around champion since 2017. Although her four teammates from Paris 2024 did not participate in this year's US championships, the two alternates, Leanne Wong and Joscelyn Roberson, were among the competitors in New Orleans.

The women's events are the balance beam, floor exercise, uneven bars, and vault. Medals are earned in those events, and the gymnast with the highest total combined score wins the all-around title. Rivera won gold on beam and floor, and she tied with Skye Blakely for first on the bars. Wong won gold on the vault as well as the all-around silver, finishing 0.8 points behind Rivera.

In the men's competition, the events are floor, high bar, parallel bars, pommel horse, still rings, and vault. Hong won gold on vault, floor, and rings, took the silver on parallel bars, and won the all-around by a record-breaking margin of 7.465 points. Two-time Olympian Brody Malone narrowly edged out Hong to win the parallel bars. Taylor Burkhart won the high bar, while Patrick Hoopes earned gold on the pommel horse.

COACH OF THE WEEK

Coach's Name: **Lee Wisinski**

Team: **Brookfield Park and Rec Grade 3–4 Dodgers**

"Coach Lee has helped us learn all new things this year. During practice, we do fun drills that teach us to play better and how to work as a team. He says to always keep our hopes up even if we are down, and that the most important thing about baseball is to have fun! He gives out rewards to players who do their best in a game, and a cool keychain for the most focused player at practice." Ben, 10, and Owen, 9, Wisconsin

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com.* Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Reese Brantmeier

AGE: 20 SPORT: TENNIS
TEAM: UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Having a ball No one in my family had ever played tennis, so I found it completely by chance. I picked up a racket for the first time at age 8 and fell in love! I'm an artist off the court, and the process of constructing points and making decisions reminded me of the creativity involved in art. I started competing in local tournaments when I was about 10 and won my first national title at 14.

Role model Roger Federer has always been my favorite tennis player. In big moments, he always stayed calm. I tried to model his attitude and game style from a young age.

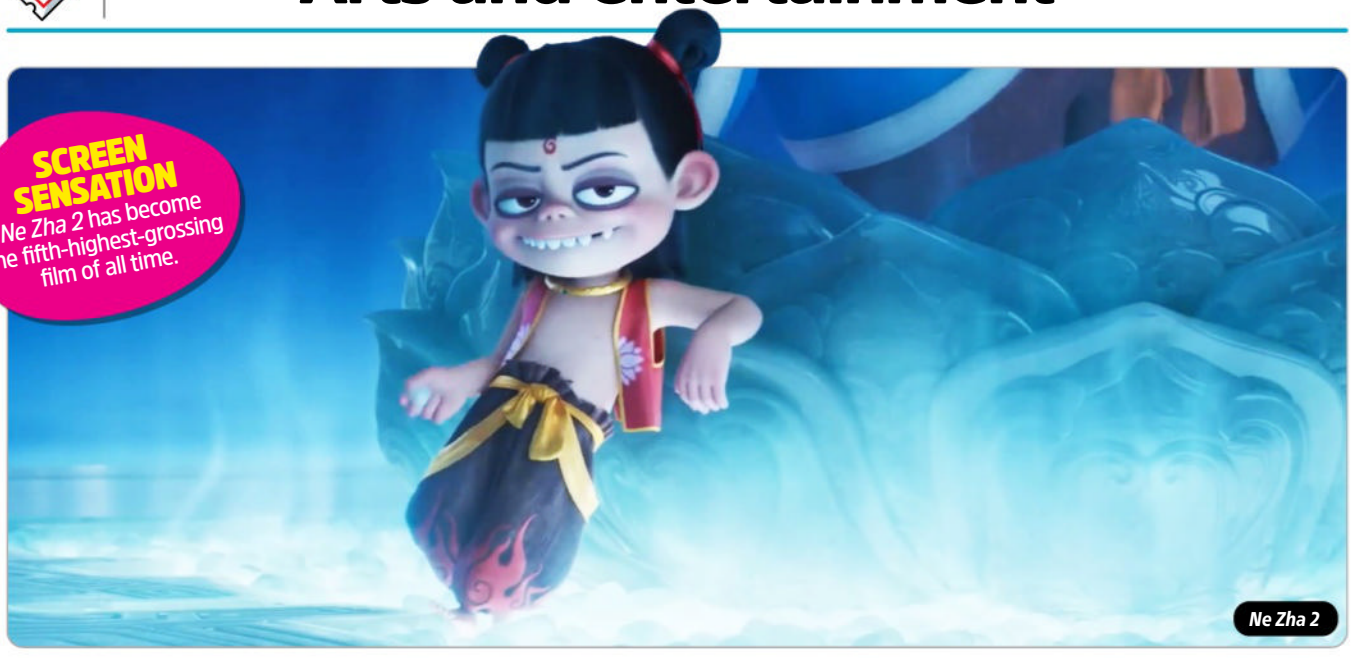
Court time Typically, I hit for two to three hours per day, five days a week. Repetitions allow you to play freely in matches, so a lot of my practices are simple. I don't mind doing the same thing over and over. As a team, we practice lots of doubles.

Helpful hobby I love to rock climb. It's a great way to build functional strength and flexibility while having a lot of fun.

Positive mindset After a loss, I try to make a list of at least three things I did well so I can gain confidence in my strengths. Next, I find three things I could have done better. That helps me feel organized and motivated when I go back to practice.

Big win My favorite tennis accomplishment has to be the 2023 NCAA championship title. It was Carolina's first outdoor national title and an honor to be part of program history. Earning that with my teammates was so much fun, and it was so rewarding to play for something bigger than myself.

AP; GETTY IMAGES; UNC ATHLETICS (2); ON THE LEFT PAGE: LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL WORLD SERIES (2); AUSL; GETTY IMAGES



SCREEN SENSATION
Ne Zha 2 has become the fifth-highest-grossing film of all time.

Ne Zha 2

Chinese blockbuster hits the US

***Ne Zha 2*, an animated fantasy adventure about two boys determining their destiny, set box-office records in its home country.**

An English-language version of one of the most popular foreign films in the world is coming to US movie theaters. *Ne Zha 2* is an animated comedic fantasy adventure from China that tells the story of two powerful boys connected by fate. The Chinese-language film was originally released in February and has earned more than $2 billion at the box office, which is more than any animated film in history. The English-dubbed version arrives on August 22.

Ne Zha (pronounced "Nuh JAH") is a powerful young warrior deity known for his rebellious spirit and heroic self-sacrifice. His story is rooted in Chinese mythology and a 16th-century novel, but it has been told in many other books and films.

Michelle Yeoh

The new movie, which is celebrated for its action scenes and stunning animation, is a sequel to a 2019 film. In that film, Ne Zha is born from a demon orb and cursed to cause destruction. He meets dragon prince Ao Bing, who was born from a spirit orb, and they team up to stop the curse. Now Ao Bing's life is in danger, and Ne Zha goes on a journey to save him and protect their world.

In the English-language version of the sequel, award-winning Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh (Madame Morrible in the film *Wicked*) voices Ne Zha's mother, Lady Yin. She said having an English-language version of the film means people won't have to worry about following the fast-paced action and reading subtitles at the same time. She is also excited that the tale will reach a wider audience. "Storytelling that comes from another place, another time, helps you to understand the rest of our world," she told *The Week Junior*.

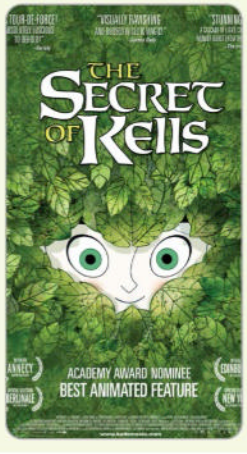
There is an important universal message in the film, she said: "Love, friendship, family, and finding your self-worth are a journey of discovery."

More popular foreign films

Castle in the Sky

This 1986 film was famous Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki's first one with Studio Ghibli. It is about two kids protecting a mysterious floating island.

The Secret of Kells



The Irish animation studio Cartoon Saloon released this film in 2009. It is set in ninth-century Ireland and is a fantasy about a boy who helps complete a magical book while defending a monastery.

Ernest & Celestine

A series of popular Belgian children's books inspired this 2012 French film about an unlikely friendship between a bear and a young mouse. It won a César Award, France's top honor in movies, for best animated film.

WOW! So far, more than 2,000 hours have been spent recording the upcoming Harry Potter: The Full-Cast Audio Editions audiobooks.

Frankie Treadaway recording *Harry Potter: The Full-Cast Audio Editions*

Exciting news for *Harry Potter* fans

Fans of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series will soon have a new way to listen to her popular tales. The audio-storytelling service Audible has teamed up with Pottermore Publishing, which releases Rowling's digital audiobooks and e-books, to create *Harry Potter: The Full-Cast Audio Editions*. Unlike the current audiobooks, which are read by a narrator, the new versions will feature a cast of more than 200 actors performing as the stories' characters, as well as music and real-world sounds. The first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, will be released on Audible on November 4, and a new one will follow each month.

Dominic McLaughlin in the HBO series

In the first three stories, Harry will be voiced by Frankie Treadaway (top photo), an actor from the UK. He was a *Potter* fan before getting the job, and that made playing Harry easier but also harder because "you don't want to disappoint," he told *The Week Junior.* The actors recorded their parts solo, and Treadaway spent hours a day at the studio, which was tiring. "I chose to stand for the whole time to help when acting physical scenes," he said.

Since many kids today weren't born when the *Potter* books and films originally came out, Treadaway said the Audible series offers "the excitement of the story unfolding and feeling truly new." He also thinks the recordings will be great for people who struggle with reading or watching films, and he believes listeners will be "blown away" by them.

In other news related to the *Potter* franchise, filming has begun on HBO's new *Harry Potter* TV series. HBO recently released a photo of Dominic McLaughlin, the actor playing young Harry, wearing his Hogwarts uniform (see inset photo). The show will begin airing in 2027.

READER RECOMMENDS

Bizaardvark *(Disney+, Hulu, Prime Video)*

"This show is incredibly underrated, and I am obsessed with it. It's about two crazy and funny girls: Paige (played by Olivia Rodrigo before she became a famous singer) and Frankie. They have a channel, Bizaardvark, where they post videos (hilarious ONLY). I highly recommend this show if you want drama, comedy, and nonstop laughter, but the overall theme is friendship. I think the funniest episode is 'Control + Alt + Escape!' from season one. In it, the girls make a video, 'Party Don't Stop,' where they throw a party and are VIPs, but they're so tired that they end up falling asleep." Quinn, 10, Massachusetts

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

THIS WEEK'S WATCH LIST

Adaptive
(Peacock)

This new documentary series gives an up-close look at the lives of four Team USA Paralympians who competed at the Paris Games last year: Ezra Frech (track and field), Jamal Hill (swimming), and wheelchair basketball players Courtney Ryan and Josie Aslakson. It is rated TV-14.

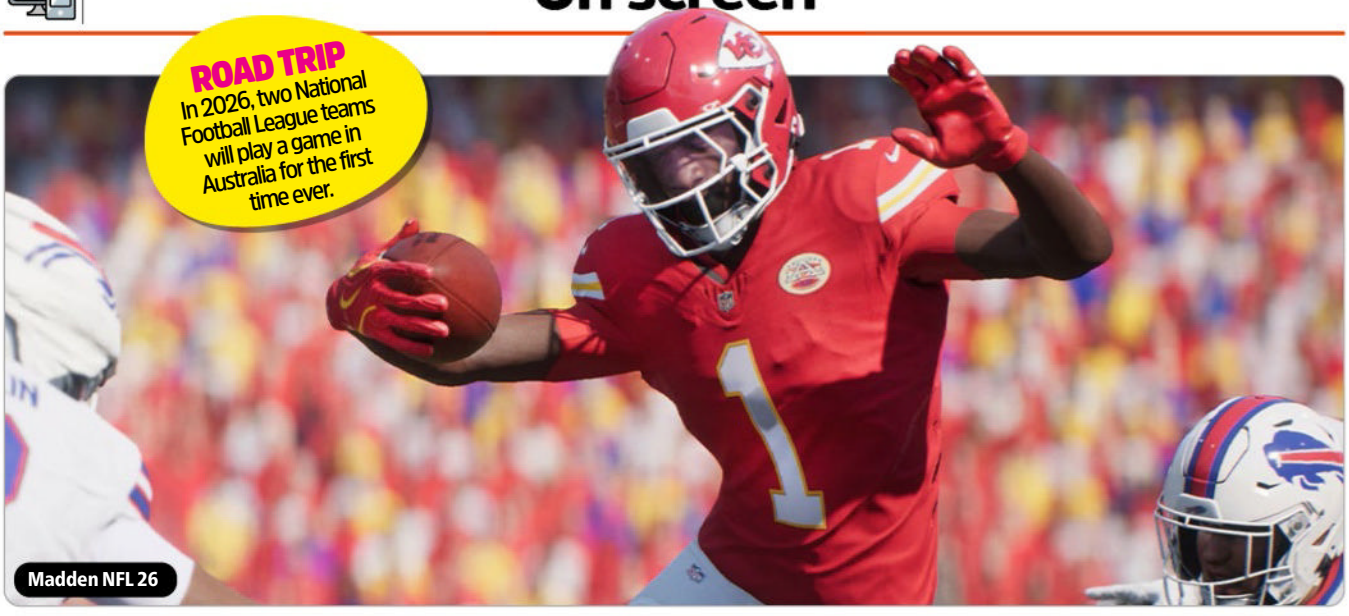
Totally Funny Animals
(The CW) (Hulu)

Short videos of animals caught on camera in silly, unexpected moments fill this new comedy show. Each episode counts down the top 10 funniest animal clips, which are sometimes grouped by fun themes, like "dogs behaving like other animals" and "pets at parties."

Lego Masters Jr.
(Fox)

In this new spin-off of the hit competition series *Lego Masters*, young builders are paired with celebrities as they take on challenges such as making Disney train rides and Ninjago cities. They have to impress expert builders and *Lego Masters* champions. One team will win $50,000.

AUDIBLE: COURTESY OF AIDAN MONAGHAN/HBO; DISNEY; NBC/PEACOCK; THE CW; TOM GRISCOM/FOX; ON LEFT PAGE: COURTESY OF A24; GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY (2); HAYAO MIYAZAKI/STUDIO GHIBLI



The virtual NFL season begins

The NFL (National Football League) preseason has kicked off, which means it's time for Madden NFL 26, the latest edition of a popular franchise. The game, which features Philadelphia Eagles running back Saquon Barkley on the cover, was just released for the Nintendo Switch 2, PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X|S, and PC. It is the first time since 2013 that a Madden game has been made for a Nintendo console.

To create more realistic action than ever, the developers used NFL data and artificial intelligence (a computer program that imitates human learning) to ensure the players and coaches make the kinds of movements and decisions they would in real life. You'll even see play call suggestions from coaches, with details about why they're good ideas. One reason this feature was added was to teach fans more about the sport. Enhancements have also been made to the weather in the game, adding new challenges.

Each year, the Madden game is updated with current NFL rosters, and Jacksonville Jaguars rookie Travis Hunter inspired a big change. He is a rare player who plays offense and defense, and that will now be an option for him and other Madden players. Playing dual positions will be hard on the virtual athletes, but Hunter was given special abilities so he is stronger than other players.

The game has its usual in-depth modes—Franchise, Ultimate Team, and Superstar—and you can play exhibition games too. If you score a touchdown, find the new "hot spots" near the end zone, which have their own celebration options.

PODCAST OF THE WEEK

THINGS BAKERS KNOW: THE KING ARTHUR BAKING PODCAST

Major podcast platforms

The hosts of this show are two food writers from a company that makes flours and other ingredients for baking. They explore the history, trends, and techniques of baking and chat with guest experts. Topics include chocolate chip cookies and pizza.

APP OF THE WEEK

THE STORYTELLER

Apple App Store, Google Play

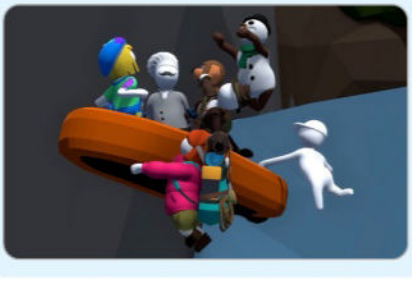
Omu is a curious star living in human form and exploring life on Earth. He lives in a hut, where he is visited by friendly spirits who all have stories to tell. Select an interactive tale and make choices to decide how the action progresses, or pick a short story that is more like a picture book.

GAME OF THE WEEK

HUMAN FALL FLAT

Gaming systems, PC, and mobile

Sydney, a 13-year-old reader of *The Week Junior*, recommended this physics-based puzzle game. You play as a human character with wobbly limbs, and each level is a dream you must navigate by stacking, pushing, pulling, or triggering mechanisms to open paths and solve challenges.



EA SPORTS (2); KING ARTHUR BAKING COMPANY; ESPRITS PRODUCTIONS; NO BRAKES GAMES

BOOK OF THE WEEK

Dream On

By Shannon Hale, illustrated by Marcela Cespedes

(Roaring Book Press)

Although Cassie is one of six kids in the family, she feels completely alone. Her baby brother takes up a lot of her parents' time, and her best friend, Vali, no longer lives across the street. One day, she finds an offer in the mail from a publishing company with a gold sticker labeled "Grand Prize Winner." Cassie believes that if she returns the form along with her choices for three magazines, she'll win a new car, furniture, or a trip to Williamsburg, Virginia. She daydreams about how happy her parents, who are struggling with money, will be when they find out she's won one of the prizes. She also promises Vali that she'll take her along on the vacation. But Cassie never receives the prizes. Instead, a bill for the magazines arrives in the mail. She feels like she has no one she can go to for help solving this problem, especially since a classmate is trying to drive a wedge between her and Vali. Just when Cassie thinks her life couldn't get worse, something finally goes her way. This page-turning graphic novel, the first in a new series, takes place in the early 1980s and is loosely based on the author's life when she was growing up.

ASK THE AUTHOR

Shannon Hale

We spoke to the author of the Book of the Week.

What inspired this book?
I wanted to write it after publishing *Real Friends*, my graphic novel memoir about the friendship trouble and anxiety I had in elementary school. I had pages of notes left over from writing that book, which I decided to use as ideas for this book to explore.

Did you grow up with siblings?
Yes, I'm one of five. I have three sisters and a brother.

What was your favorite book genre as a child?
Fantasy, for sure.

What advice would you give your younger self?
It's OK to make mistakes. Be patient and have compassion for yourself as you figure things out.

If you could live inside a book, what kind would you choose?
I'd choose a comic book—and I'd have superpowers but live in a regular house.

READER RECOMMENDS

Circus Mirandus *By Cassie Beasley*

"When Micah's grandpa falls ill, Micah's mean great-aunt comes to help. She doesn't let Micah visit his grandpa, but he sneaks in, and Grandpa tells him about a magical circus he used to visit. At the circus, there is a magical man, called the Lightbender, who owes him a miracle. Micah leaves home to find the magical circus and try to save his grandpa. This story has many fun twists!" Tessa, 12, Mississippi

Do you have a book to recommend? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

4 books full of fun crafts and projects

These titles can inspire pop-up puppets, stretchy slime, painted prints, and more.

The Big Book of Fantasy Kid Crafts

By Jennifer Buchheit

(Page Street Kids)

If you're a fan of dragons, fairies, mermaids, or unicorns, this craft book is for you. It has a chapter of crafts for each fantastical creature. One of the clever projects shows you how to construct a unicorn pop-up puppet. *Ages 7+*

The Happiest Kids Crafts in the World!

By Timm Sevitz

(Page Street Kids)

This book's projects come with easy-to-follow instructions and clear photos of the finished products. The chapters focus on different types of crafting. For example, in the painting section, you can learn how to make balloon planet prints and crumbled tie-dye paper. *Ages 8+*

The Kids' Book of Craft Love

By Irene Smit and Astrid van der Hulst

(Workman Kids)

Besides traditional crafts, this book features writing-based projects, such as making an adventure journal and writing a poetry zine. You can also use the pages of the book to create daisy chains, flower bouquets, and other paper crafts. *Ages 7+*

Marvel Crafts

(DK Children)

With more than 100 projects to choose from—inspired by Marvel Comics characters—you're bound to find several to try. Some of the crafts you can make are Avengers masks, Captain America's shield, and Ms. Marvel's stretchy slime. Entertaining trivia about the superheroes is sprinkled throughout the book. *Ages 7–10*

BOOKS: COURTESY OF PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR: JENN FLORENCE; GETTY IMAGES

DID YOU KNOW?
The average length of the school year in the US is about 180 days.

Get organized for school

Use these tips and tricks to prepare yourself for a strong start.

Whether you have a few weeks of summer left or your new school year has recently begun, you can put some plans in place that will set you up for your best year yet. Here are a few smart strategies that will get you excited about what lies ahead.

Set yourself up for homework success

Take a few minutes to check out your homework space. Is it comfortable and well lit? Can you easily reach your charger and pencil sharpener? Give it a test run with any summer work you have left. That way, if you need to make changes—like moving a lamp or adjusting your chair—you can do so now. Also, think about what time will work best for you to do homework during the school year. It might be directly after school or after a snack and a break. Talk to a parent about when you do your best work so they can help you stick with that timing.

Pack lunch the night before.

Be smart about your supplies

First, look up your supply list on your school website to see what your teacher recommends. Before buying new supplies, gather any pencils, pens, and erasers from last year. You may also have some binders, folders, and notebooks at home—you can just tear out any used pages or relabel them for this year.

Plan your first-week wardrobe

Feeling your best not only on your first day but throughout your first week will keep you confident as you settle into your new schedule. Try clothes on to make sure they fit and feel comfortable. Assemble outfits for the week and arrange them on hangers so they're ready to go.

Start shifting your sleep schedule

If you've been staying up late and sleeping in, it's time to get back into a regular sleep routine. Change your habits in small increments. The week before school, gradually adjust your bedtime and wake up 30 minutes earlier each day until you're clocking the recommended nine to 12 hours of sleep and still waking up on time for school. You can also get more sleep by doing tasks like making lunch the night before.

Plan a mini celebration

On the Friday night of the first school week, plan to get ice cream or see a movie with your family. This will let you savor some remaining summer fun while rewarding yourself for a successful start to the school year.

Goals for the year

Besides getting ready for the first days of school, you can also set long-term goals, like these:

Join a club A school club can help you enjoy a hobby more often or explore a new interest, whether it's chess, gaming, or yearbook. Look out for the interest meeting so you can plan to attend.

Speak up in class Raise a hand at least once a week in class. Using your voice will give you a confidence boost that will help you contribute to discussions inside and outside the classroom.

Ask someone to lunch To get to know a classmate better, invite them to lunch. Also set a goal to be open if someone asks you!

PERSONAL TOUCH
A bookplate is a label that identifies a book's owner and is usually pasted inside its front cover.

Create your own custom bookplates

What you'll need

- Scissors
- White block erasers (found online or at stationery or office-supply stores)
- Pencil with a new eraser
- A coin or small cookie cutters
- Ink pad
- All-purpose blank labels or name-tag stickers (from stationery, office-supply, or online stores)
- Baby wipes or paper towels
- Markers
- Rubber stamps of letters (optional)

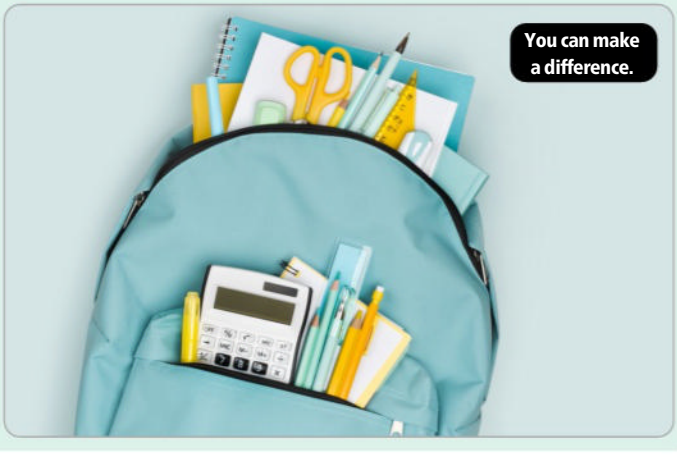
Instructions

1. Use scissors to cut some erasers into geometric shapes, like squares, triangles, and rectangles.
2. Use a pencil and a coin or small cookie cutters to trace shapes, such as circles or hearts, onto other erasers. You can also hand-draw shapes, like leaves, onto the erasers. With scissors, carefully cut these shapes out of the erasers.
3. Press your eraser stamps onto an ink pad and use them to decorate the blank labels.
4. Try combining stamped shapes to make pictures. For example, use squares and rectangles for a robot, or circles and an inverted triangle for an ice cream cone with a cherry on top (see examples above). Be sure to wipe the stamps clean with a baby wipe or damp paper towel before switching colors.
5. Other ideas: Use the eraser from your pencil to make polka dots, or your fingers to make dots and ovals (like we did for the purple flower and balloons pictured above).
6. When you've finished creating your images, use markers to add words, names, or details—like stems, eyes, or the lines on a basketball. You can also use letter stamps to add a name.
7. Allow the ink to dry. Affix the bookplate to the inside cover or first page of a book. You can make more as gifts for friends, teachers, or a book club!

ECO TIP OF THE WEEK

HOST A BACKPACK DRIVE FOR STUDENTS

Every year, many students begin their first day of school without basic supplies. You can help kids get what they need—and protect the environment by keeping items out of landfills—by collecting clean, gently used backpacks to share. With the help of a parent or a school administrator, plan a drive. Make fliers with details, such as where to drop off donations. Many families buy school supplies in bulk, so ask if they would also donate items like extra pencils, pens, folders, and notebooks. After you've gathered all the supplies, sort items into backpacks and work with an adult to transport them to a school, children's shelter, or community center.



JODI LEVINE FOR SUPERMAKEIT; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Word search

Can you find all these dog breeds? They are hidden horizontally, vertically, or diagonally and can be forward or backward. When you're done, read the remaining letters to get a bonus message.

AFGHAN
AKITA
BEAGLE
BORZOI
BOXER
CHOW
COLLIE
CORGI
DALMATIAN
GERMAN SHEPHERD
HUSKY
IRISH SETTER
PEKINGESE
PIT BULL
POODLE
PUG
ROTTWEILER
SALUKI
SAMOYED
SPITZ
ST. BERNARD
WHIPPET

				T	O	R		T	O	Y			
			E	S	E	G	N	I	K	E	P	T	H	E
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					I	S	A	L	U	K	I	N	G	
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					T	R	E	L	D					
				I	O	Z	R	O	B					
					C	R	O	M	C	F		O	Z	L
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			S	T	B	E	R	N	A	R	D	U		S	P
			A	I	T	I	D	S	M	O	B				
		C	R	P	E	E	T	H	H	T					
		B	H	S	A	N	P	E	I	A					
A			P	O	O	D	L	E	P	L	F	S			
O	K		M	E	X	W	O	F	H	I	G	T			
I	R	I	S	H	S	E	T	T	E	R	H	A			
	H	E	T	A	C	T	R	O	R		A	W	E		
			S	A	M	O	Y	E	D		N	R	S	B	

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

OFF SIDES

Make three different five-letter words by using the letters given to fill in the blanks.

B	C	D	K	N	P

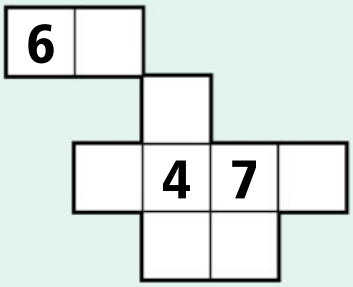
_ L E A _

_ L E A _

_ L E A _

Out of order

The numbers 1 to 9 can fit, one per square, so that no two consecutive numbers are in squares that touch in any way, even at a corner. Use the numbers already given to figure out where the rest of the numbers go.



FILL IN THE BLANKS

Fill in the blanks in each sentence with words that are anagrams of each other, like STAR and ARTS. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)

1. The fresh flowers had been cut four hours earlier, and by the time we put them in a ___ ___ ___ ___ it was already too late to ___ ___ ___ ___ them.
2. At the beginning of the school year there will be a special class in which they ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ us the importance of honesty and have us sign a promise not to ___ ___ ___ ___ ___.
3. Before firefighters can ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ people from high floors, they have to make certain their ladders are ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ enough to support their weight.

BACK TO SCHOOL 2025

Spot the difference

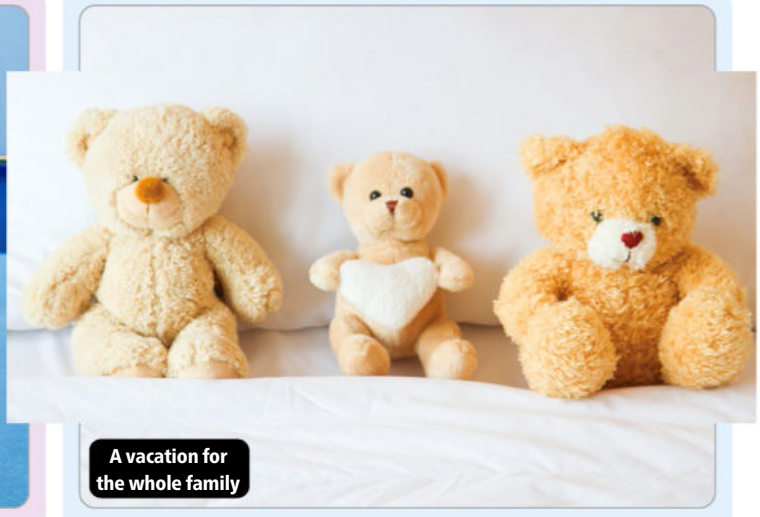
These two pictures of a school lunch line appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?

PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

Fill in the blanks hint: In sentence 3, the second word begins with SE.

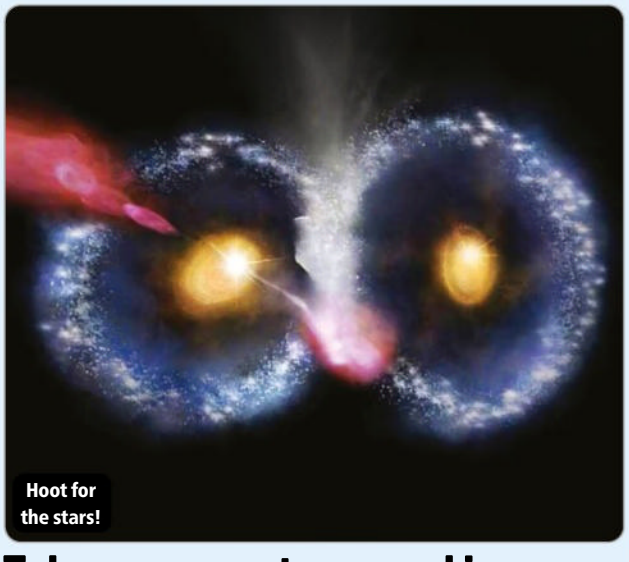
Riding into a different century

Lizanne Wilmot has pedaled her way to an unusual world speed record. She rides the penny-farthing, a type of bicycle from the 1800s that has a front wheel up to 5 feet tall and a much smaller wheel in the back. She recently reached a speed of 25.92 miles per hour, nearly twice the average speed of a regular bike. Wilmot said there is a booming community of "bike weirdos" like her in Australia, where she lives. When you're on a penny-farthing, she said, "you can't help but to smile the entire time."



Japan's hotels for teddy bears

Guests at a chain of hotels in Japan can treat their stuffed toys to beds of their own for an extra $3. *Nui-katsu*, which means "doing things with stuffed animals," has become a trend in the country as people take their teddies out to visit museums and eat in restaurants. Now the toys can get a good night's rest in their own miniature beds—complete with sheets and tiny pajamas. "I feel like my five teddy bears will fight over who gets to sleep in the special bed," one commenter said.



Telescope spots an owl in space

The James Webb Space Telescope has spotted what appears to be the face of an inquisitive owl staring down at Earth. In fact, it's a rare collision of two ring-shaped galaxies with black holes at their centers, which look like a pair of eyes. Its "beak" is "a region of incredibly intense activity" where the galaxies meet, researcher Mingyu Li told Live Science. Scientists think the "cosmic owl" is 11 billion light-years away and say it gives them a greater understanding of how stars formed when the universe was young.

Cooling homes with yogurt

Scientists have come up with a new way to cool down homes on a hot summer day: applying a thin coating of yogurt to the outside of windows. This can lower the temperature of the house during the day, the experts say, because the light-colored yogurt reflects the heat and shields the window from the sunshine. After research and testing, the scientists concluded that yogurt applied to windows could lower the indoor temperature by up to 6.3° F. Is this story real, or is it a dairy disaster?*

*Real! A team from Loughborough University in the UK said that although the yogurt smelled while it was drying, it was fine afterward. Other experts have advised against using food on windows, however, so don't try this at home!

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS; SHUTTERSTOCK; COVER IMAGES; GETTY IMAGES (3); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

Editor's note

This week we're celebrating the start of the 2025–2026 school year. Have you gone back to class already, or are you preparing for the year to begin? Some US students returned in July, while others will start after Labor Day. Do you think that's OK, or should every school in the US follow the same calendar? That's the topic of this week's Big Debate (p8), and we'd love to know what you think! Share your opinion online at theweekjunior.com/polls. This issue also includes an article about new school policies, from phone bans to changes in the amount of recess time, that are being implemented around the country (p4). In addition, we provide advice on setting yourself up for school success (p24) and instructions for making your own bookplate and hosting a backpack drive for kids in need (p25). Our entire team hopes you have your best school year yet!

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

Raising funds for flood recovery

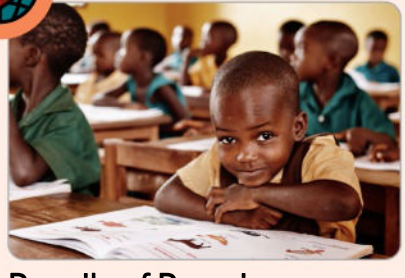
Ellie, 10, and Millie, 8, Colorado

"We read about the Texas flooding in *The Week Junior* and decided we wanted to raise money to help with the cleanup and recovery. Our mom taught us how to harvest Columbine flower seeds from her garden, so we made packets to sell in our neighborhood for $2 each. We added money from our allowance and donated it all to the Kerr County Flood Relief Fund. It made us feel happy to know that our money would go to the families in Texas, and we were so glad we could find a way to help."

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK
What starts out tall then slowly grows shorter?
A candle

CHARITY OF THE WEEK

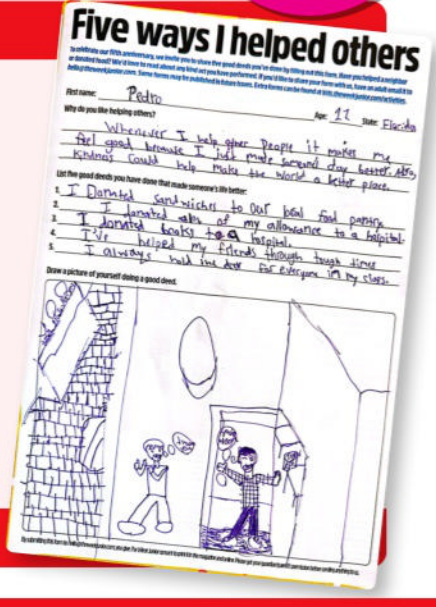


Pencils of Promise

This organization's goal is to set students up for success. It builds bathrooms and supplies water filters to schools to create a healthy learning environment. It also trains educators on the latest teaching methods. Since its founding in 2008, the group has funded more than 1,000 water filters and organized 20,000 coaching sessions for teachers, benefiting more than 288,000 students. Find out more at pencilsofpromise.org.

Your five good deeds

Pedro, an 11-year-old from Florida, enjoys helping others. His good deeds include donating his allowance to a hospital, holding the door open for everyone, and giving food to a local food pantry. To mark *The Week Junior*'s fifth anniversary this year, we're asking readers to share five good deeds they've done. Have you helped a neighbor or a friend or performed a kind act? Go to kids.theweekjunior.com/activities to download a form like the one shown at right. Fill it out, then have an adult email it to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*. We'll feature some of the submissions on this page in future issues.


Five ways I helped others

First name: Pedro Age: 11 State: Florida

Why do you like helping others?
Whenever I help other people it makes me feel good because I just made someone else's day better. Also, kindness could help make the world a better place.

List five good deeds you have done that made someone's life better:
1. I Donated sandwiches to our local food pantry.
2. I donated some of my allowance to a hospital.
3. I donated books to a hospital.
4. I've helped my friends through tough times.
5. I always hold the door for everyone in my class.

Draw a picture of yourself doing a good deed.

THE WEEK Junior IT'S YOUR TURN Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

Your turn

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.

"I made the coconut corn chowder for my family. I thought it was delicious, and I can't wait for my family to try it!" Jude, 11, Illinois

"I was so excited when I saw falcons in *The Week Junior*! There are two on my street." Ellie, 9, California

"We made *The Week Junior*'s pasta salad recipe for a pool party potluck, and it was delicious!" Rohan, 8, and Maya, 11, Texas

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Mr. Bacall**

School: **Trailside Elementary school**

"I think Mr. Bacall is the best teacher because he is so kind, friendly, fun, and excited to teach us. He is always motivating my class to do our best. We can talk to him about anything. For example, when someone is not feeling great, Mr. Bacall always asks if there is anything he can do. I've had a lot of other elementary school teachers, but I think Mr. Bacall should be recognized."

Cayden, 10, Utah

Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week!
Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

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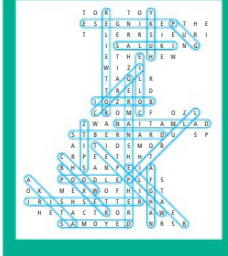
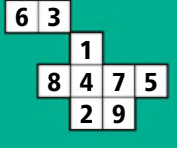
Puzzle answers (from page 26)



Word search
Unused letters: Toto the terrier in *The Wizard of Oz* was paid more than some of the actors.

Off sides
bleak
clean
plead

Fill in the blanks
1. vase, save
2. teach, cheat
3. rescue, secure



Quiz answers (from page 30) **1** c) Saquon Barkley **2** False. They add five to 10 minutes. **3** b) November **4** Alpha Centauri **5** c) 20,000 **6** True **7** New York Giants **8** b) Angola **9** Pepper **10** True **11** Grand Prize Winner **12** c) 40 **13** False. *Hamilton* celebrated the 10th anniversary of its Broadway opening. **14** a) Pennsylvania **15** Japan

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 Who is on the cover of the new video game Madden NFL 26?

a) DeVonta Smith

b) Jalen Hurts

c) Saquon Barkley

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

2 True or false? Orangutans add 15 to 20 minutes to their daytime nap for every hour of sleep they miss.

True ☐ False ☐

3 When will the first book of *Harry Potter: The Full-Cast Audio Editions* be released?

a) October b) November c) December

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

4 What is the name of the star system where the James Webb Space Telescope recently found evidence of a planet?

5 How many lighthouses are there around the world?

a) 200 b) 2,000 c) 20,000

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

6 True or false? *Ne Zha 2* is the highest-grossing animated film of all time.

True ☐ False ☐

7 Osi Umenyiora won two Super Bowls with which NFL team?

8 A doctor in Florida performed robotic surgery on a patient who was 7,000 miles away in what country?

a) Albania b) Angola c) Australia

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

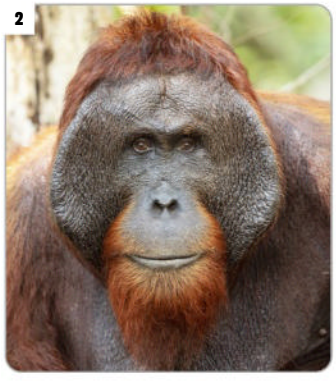
3

13

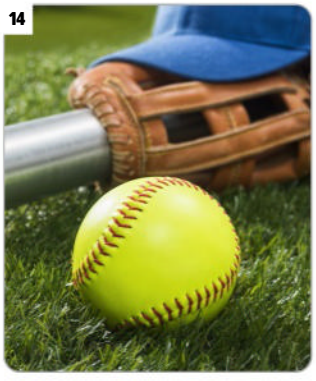
ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

5

2



14



9 What is the name of the cat in Florida who helped his owner discover a previously unknown strain of a virus?

10 True or false? Hezly Rivera is the youngest US gymnastics all-around champion since 2017.

True ☐ False ☐

11 In the graphic novel *Dream On*, what is written on the gold sticker that Cassie receives in the mail?

12 Giant river otters returned to the Iberá Wetlands of Argentina after how many years?

a) 20

b) 30

c) 40

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

13 True or false? The musical *Hamilton* recently celebrated the fifth anniversary of its opening on Broadway.

True ☐ False ☐

14 A team from which state won this year's Little League Softball World Series?

a) Pennsylvania

b) Indiana

c) Oklahoma

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

15 A chain of hotels in what country is offering guests special beds for stuffed toys?

THE WEEK Junior

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“It helps in school by keeping me up to date with news.”

— Elizabeth

THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
THE WEEK Junior
Making sense of the world
ON THE TRAIL OF T.REX
New study offers clues to where the mighty dino's ancestors originally roamed p14
LAKE OR OCEAN?
Which body of water is best? Vote in our big debate! p8
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THE WEEK Junior

WATER WORLD

There are about 30 species of clown fish, which are small, colorful saltwater fish that live in the tentacles of sea anemones, a relative of jellyfish.

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